

New Understanding of Vaticanum II

Closing Address of the President of AMI General Major Norbert Sinn

Dear Friends of AMI,

Not only aggiornamento of the Catholic Church but a further essay to determine guidelines for a positive just life of mankind, including military personnel worldwide.

Vaticanum II strives all fields of life, concentrates on the questions of responsibility, i.e. self-responsibility, Christian ethics and values.

There is no higher value on earth existing than life in dignity and justice. The documents relating to military, military tasks, behavior and missions are especially laid down in "Gaudium et Spes" and "Pacem in Terris".

Of course these documents have to be understood as children of their era in the midst of the so-called cold war when the world was still divided in two antagonistic hemispheres.

Since then world has changed without enabling governments to solve the main problems of mankind, just the ways the problems arise have changed.

Serving as a Christian soldier is easier in the frame of a country with legal standards on a democratic basis, having in mind the welfare of the people, respecting integrity, freedom and independent justice.

50 years after Vaticanum II we can state that the announced documents have not lost their actuality. Au contraire!

Both documents have to be seen as work in progress – because already the fathers of the documents were clear looking to accept that world and mankind will not change within a few years and much more time will be needed for making our world a better one.

Soldiers in armed forces of a democratic state shall trust their governments, that they decide right about military missions, sending soldiers as the longer arm of the state into a conflict.

Nevertheless, one of the main aspects will be again the formation of conscience, the acceptance of the unchangeable rights of men. And it is not only a question of military people, but all parts of society including the elected or determined politicians responsible for leading their respective countries.

Military leaders take the responsibility for how to fulfill a military operation by following the ROE, respecting the laws on war and to behave in an honorable way.

Politically leaders take the responsibility for the armed forces by provide them substantial support, by bringing them in to the position to fulfill military tasks and missions by fostering them in the public.

Looking on the changes of armed conflicts bringing up new forms of fighting, fighting as a Christian soldier becomes more and more challenging.

AMI and its goals can essentially contribute to enable soldiers to organize their duties and private life on the basis of Christianity ethics and values

Doing this on the basis of Gaudium et Spes , Pacem in Terris and Apostolicam Constitutatem, Ami is convinced of contributing to a more peaceful and better world.

So far the results of our conference.

We will put these results together in one single paper and all delegations are invited to distribute it in their respective countries, as we will do it from the AMI side.

It is a great pleasure for us that two more countries became new members of AMI, our host Slovenia and the USA. Maybe some of our other associated friend wants to take that step as well. Thank you trusting AMI, my team and me.

I am also grateful that the report of our treasurer was accepted. It makes work easier! Thank you.

Looking to the future:

As it is at the moment, the AMI Conference 2014 in Slovenia will take place from September 21 -26.

A year later our 50 years founding conference 2015 will take place in Spain. I will try to engage more with CELAM, not present here but an full AMI member.

We have four days of intense work behind us. Tomorrow will be more time for reflecting, breathing and looking at our beautiful host country Slovenia.

Of course I want to thank:

- Ministry of Defense, represented by Chief of Defence Staff
- Military chaplaincy of the armed forces of Slovenia by Chaplain Aleksander Urek
- Vicar General Mons. Dr. Jože Plut
- Military Chaplain Milan Preglj and his team

Thank you all for organizing this conference and the spouses program.

Thank you for your hospitality and all the information we got about Slovenia and this beautiful town Celje.

For all of us it was surprising to recognize how the House Dom Sveti Jozef is organized and how elderly people living here, are accepted and are cared for.